

SUNDERLAND INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP FESTIVAL, FEATURING THE KITE FESTIVAL, 2008

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the delivery of this years Sunderland International Friendship Festival, featuring the Kite Festival, 2008.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Sunderland International Kite Festival is now in its 23rd year and took place on the 5 and 6 July 2008 at the Northern Area Playing Fields, Stephenson, Washington.
- 2.2 The festival is the biggest kite event in the United Kingdom and one of the best known in the world. Each year the festival attracts thousands of people who come to see the famous kite fliers and makers from right across the globe.
- 2.3 The festival was rebranded Sunderland International Friendship Festival in 2007 to recognise and celebrate the ethos of friendship generated by the spirit of the festival.
- 2.4 As part of this years event, funding was secured from Washington SIB Budget which was used to enhance the Family Activities Programme. A branded Washington Pride Family Activities Marquee was the venue for most of the family activities taking place on site. A programme of advanced outreach arts workshops, including kite making took place prior to the event with schools and community groups in the Washington area.

3.0 THE 2008 EVENT

- 3.1 This year's event attracted visitors from around the world regionally and locally. The very poor weather conditions, with heavy rainfall, drastically reduced the number of visitors.
- 3.2 The programme consisted of:
- **International Kite flying** -This year the event attracted international kite fliers from all over the world, including Japan, China, India, Ghana, USA and many more countries in Europe.
 - **Music Programme** - This year an exciting line up of local bands and bands from around the region provided an excellent and varied programme of music. The local bands in particular, thoroughly enjoyed the experience of performing on a professional outdoor stage. This is linked to and part of the City's Live Music Strategy. A number of young bands from Oxclose Music Project and Washington Music Collective showcased their talent as part of the music programme of the

Festival. The programme also featured choirs from St Cuthbert's and Diamond Hall Primary Schools who were finalists in the Schools Choral Competition, City Sings.

- **Street Theatre** - The Street Theatre was very well received and included Fairly Fresh Fish Company, Green Fingered Folk, Ooze bugs, Green Fingered Gals, Living Portraits, Price Check and Notional Trust from leading entertainers, The Bread and Butter Theatre Company, SWANK, Comedy Characters, Fair Play and Carcophony also delighted the visitors with their innovative performances.
- **Family Activities** - There was a wide variety of family activities available at the Festival in the Washington Pride Family Activities Marquee. Activities included; kite making, music making, drop in dance workshops, wind chime making, chinese paper cutting and creative arts sessions with professional artists. The National Year of Reading was celebrated with a story telling tepee with professional storytellers who read a variety of stories for all age groups.
- **Children's Activities** - Including kite making with professional artists a professional storyteller, arts workshops with artists from Infinite Arts, dance workshops, wind chime making, music activity and many more.

4.0 MEDIA COVERAGE

- 4.1 The event attracted significant coverage in all areas of the media, television, radio and press.
- 4.2 Publicity included, BBC Look North, Sun FM, Sunderland Echo, Evening Chronicle, Northern Echo, BBC Wear Website and BBC Newcastle.

5.0 MARKET RESEARCH

- 5.1 Market Research for this year's International Friendship Festival was undertaken 'In House' to gain visitor profiles and feedback about the event. Over 200 responses were gained.

Of those questioned at the festival:-

31% were residents of Sunderland

30% were residents of Washington

33% were from elsewhere in the North East Region

6% were from elsewhere in the UK

34% of parties questioned were made up of Under 16's

The highest percentage of adults attending were in the 35-44 age group.

When asked why they were attending the event 38% of respondents said they visited the event every year. This was the highest response. 14% of those surveyed said that they lived locally.

Many comments made by the public were on the title of the event. Some of these included:-

'People are less likely to follow road signs to a Friendship Festival than to a Kite Festival'

General comments were also made about re-introducing popular elements from previous events, including re-instating the International Kite Festival name.

'Disappointed that there was not a Craft Marquee'
'Great event for the Family'

6.0 FUNDING

- 6.1 In addition to the core budget, funding was secured from Arts Council North East as well as sponsorship from the Sunderland Echo and Chromozone. As outlined in 2.4 additional funding secured from the Washington SIB Budget enhanced the Family Activities Programme. A branded Washington Pride Family Activities Marquee was the venue for most of the family activities taking place on site, as well as the activities arranged on the day, a programme of advanced outreach arts workshops, including kite making, took place prior to the event with schools and community groups in Washington.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Festival managed to provide an entertaining and diverse programme which was enjoyed by all who visited the event. Unfortunately, the adverse weather conditions prevented the usual high number of attendees.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.
- 8.2 Members are asked to note that the Festival will take place on Saturday 4 July and Sunday 5 July 2009.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Sunderland International Kite Festival 2008 Publicity Leaflet.
- 9.2 Customer Survey